What's Happening In And About The Yankee Air Force Museum
Hangar Happenin's

May 1999

YANKEE AIR FORCE

Yankee Air Museum P.O. Box 590 Belleville, MI 48112 Tel. (734) 483 – 4030

Hangar Happenin's
is a monthly newsletter
for the Yankee Air Force

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Meeting Schedule
1st Wednesday of Month – 7:30 PM
General Membership

3rd Wednesday of Month – 7:30 PM
Board Meeting
Public Welcome

2nd Wednesday even-numbered months
7:30 PM in the "Doghouse"
Flyable Aircraft Meeting
Everyone Welcome

MUSEUM HOURS
10 – 4 TUESDAY-SATURDAY
12 – 4 SUNDAY
Closed Mondays and Holidays

From the Editors' Desk:

The *Happenin's* is on the move again! We have changed offices with Beverly Dallape, the PR lady. It was most kind of Bev to let us have her old office, and to go back into our small one. It seems that the *HH* office is the place to congregate on Saturdays and it got very crowded in our other digs. Our room number is now 223. If you send us anything, using our room number will speed up the delivery to us.

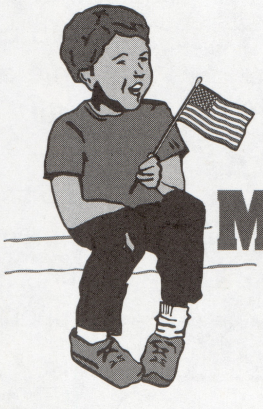
We are also receiving quite a few photographs to use; we appreciate them, and will be returning them as quickly as possible.

Flying season starts this month and so everyone can look forward to more airshow stories now with pictures from our digital camera.

On Saturday, March 20, the polishing party took place in the hangar. We had about 140 people show up and polish all three of the flyable aircraft. You will see some photos in this month's issue from the party. A good time was had by all!

We have had a conversation with the Director of Maintenance, Fred Lockwood, and he has made a suggestion. He has to weigh the C-47 and suggested a 50/50 raffle about guessing its weight. More to follow in next month's issue.

The *HH* Staff hopes you have a safe and thoughtful Memorial Day. It is a time to remember the sacrifices and loss of many brave people.



MEMORIAL DAY

Our internet address is:
http://www.yankeeairmuseum.org
Our e-mail address is:
yankeeairmuseum@provide.net

Hangar Happenin's e-mail address is:
seaton@provide.net

Who was that ?

Last month's mystery photo was taken at Kristport Airport which was near 13-Mile & Orchard Lake Roads in the early 1950s. The lovely lady posing beside the Cessna was a young Civil Air Patrol cadet whose squadron commander was Captain John E. Day. You may know her now as **Donna Day !**

Visitors to the Museum

As of 3/27/99 we have had visitors from 11 states, England, Ireland, Sweden, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, France, and Canada

Past Dates of Interest

3 May 1952 1st successful North Pole landing: a C-47 !
5 May 1866 Memorial Day first observed in Waterloo, NY to honor soldiers who died in Civil War
5 May 1961 1st manned US space flight (Alan Shepard)
8 May 1945 VE Day (Victory in Europe/World War II)
9 May 1932 1st solo instrument flight
10 May 1940 Germany invades Belgium-Holland-Luxembourg
12 May 1949 Russians end blockade of West Berlin
14 May 1908 1st passenger flight (Wright plane /Kitty Hawk)
15 May 1918 1st permanent airmail route
16 May 1955 USAF markings approved for aircraft wings
20-21 May 1927 Lindbergh's solo trans-Atlantic flight
20 May 1951 Capt. J. Jabara 1st USAF jet ace
21 May 1944 *Operation Chattanooga Choo-Choo* makes air attacks on trains in Germany & France
31 May 1945 Last of 18,188 B-24 Liberators delivered
May 1971 Last Monday in May becomes national Memorial Day holiday

Winner of the April meeting
50/50 drawing was
JERRY COBLEIGH
who donated his winnings to John Day for hangar upkeep

From the Head - Office, That Is!

by Bill Hanney, President

The airshow season will be on us by the time you get this. Looks like we're going to be real busy again this year. Lots of work and lots of fun!

We'll start off at Grosse Ile on 5/15-16, then Grand Rapids on 5/21-23, and then on through the summer. Right here at Willow Run we'll have two huge weekends when we'll need all the help we can get: Memorial Day 5/31 and the Wayne County Airshow 6/26-27.

To bring you up-to-date on a couple of things: 1) We're still waiting to hear from the party who may donate an aircraft we would love to have (they are off to Sun n' Fun, so we wait). 2) Ray Jackson, Erv Stirnweis and I went to the Mutual Concerns of Air and Space Museums Seminar in Washington, DC, 3/21-24. We did get some excellent information, new ideas, and one new member! We also had some time that was dull and non-productive, as is common with all such meetings. We agreed that we need better publicity and public exposure; we need professional planning and direction and we need a lot more money to get our new and improved museum started. 3) As of this writing, we are awaiting a hearing on the lawsuit that was filed against us. Our lawyer feels that we are on solid ground and I'll try to keep you aware as things progress.

As we get into our busy season, I'd like to encourage you to get out to the Museum and pitch in. The aircraft polishing party was an excellent example of the fun that can be found in joining with others in a big task. We had approximately 145 people, young and old alike, who had a good time and did a great job. Many thanks to all of you!

I don't like to dump a lot of heavy stuff on you so I'll try to keep it light from here on out. Just remember, we're here to do our best and to have fun. "Have fun" isn't the only thing, but it is important. Have Fun.

Help Wanted!!!!
For Memorial Day Open House

John Day needs about 25 people to work in various areas during the Memorial Day Open House on Monday, May 31, 1999. Come and be a part of our first open house of the season, and help your organization. No skill is necessary; all that is needed is the desire to help. Contact John Day at the Hangar on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday. Now is your chance to make a difference! **SEE PAGE 14 !**

AirMichigan
Wayne County Air Show

Dates: Saturday June 26 and Sunday June 27, 1999
Place: Willow Run Airport
Times: Gates Open at 9:00 AM, Flying Events are from 10:15 AM to 4:30 PM

Major Attractions:

- USN Blue Angels - Jet Demonstration Team
- NAV Plus Challenge Series CASPA Aerobatic Competition to include:
- Matt Chapman - Mudry CAP 231 - 4th place finish 98 World Aerobatic Championships
- Mike Goulian - Mudry CAP 232 - 9th place finish 98 World Aerobatic Championships
- Ian Groome - Russion SU-31 - International Aerobatic Competitor
- Rocky Hill - AOL 4.0 Extra 300 - World Record Speed Holder
- Gene Soucy - Avemco Extra 300 - 3 time US Aerobatic Champ
- Sean D. Tucker - 10-10-220 Power Aerobatic Team 98 CASPA Champ
- US Army Golden Knights Precision Parachute Team
- USN F-14 Tomcat Tactical Demonstration
- French Connection - Dual Aerobatic Team
- Nicorette/Nicoderm CQ - SNJ-2 Six Plane Formation Skytypers
- Kyle Franklin -Wingwalking Act
- Jimmy Franklin - "*Red Rocket*" World's Only Jet-Assisted Waco
- Ed Shipley - Aircraft of the World P-51 Mustang Demonstration
- Construction Helicopter, Willow Run - Demonstration - 300 Foot Auto Drop
- Danny Clisham - Master of Ceremonies & Voice of the Air Show (& YAF member !)

Also featured: Military Jet Demonstrations and Flybys Air Force, Army, Marine, Coast Guard and Navy Static Display Aircraft. Yankee Air Force - WW II Historic Aircraft Static Display. Radio Controlled Aircraft Demonstration. General Aviation and Commercial Aircraft Exhibit

Advance tickets for the airshow will be available in the Yankee Air Force Gift Shop starting in late April or mid-May. The YAF will earn $1 for each ticket sold through the gift shop or by way of the mail-in flyers that Ray Hunter will distribute as soon as they are printed. Because of losses to the YAF in past years, tickets will not be "consigned" to YAF members.

Ticket prices are as follows:

General Admission - Adult $15 ($12 advance in YAF Gift Shop)
General Admission – Child $12 ($8 advance in YAF Gift Shop)
Children are ages 6 to 11.
Ages 5 & under are admitted free.

Parking – $3 each vehicle

Ray Hunter is the YAF representative to the Air Show promoters. As in past years, the YAF will close the museum and gift shop in deference to Air Show activities. Promoters from the Air Show will provide a limited number of Worker Passes for only those YAF members working on various YAF activities associated with the show. A sign-up book for various airshow activities will be available in the "Doghouse" around the end of March. The YAF will not be participating in concession beer sales because of corporate liability. Because of safety restrictions and other agreements, YAF members may come to the museum and work on the two days of the airshow, but may not be outside during actual airshow flying. Willow Run Gate "A" will be used as the main public entrance to the Air Show beginning at 8:00 AM on the two days of the show.

Barry's Brainbuster

What company was the first in the United States to build an airport terminal and an airport hotel? Also where were these built? We have hidden the answer somewhere. Did you find last month's answer? If you didn't, look at the photos again of the covering of the CG-4 elevator.

WAR STORIES

Edited by Jim Beck

Donald G. Staebler, YAF # G 3267, Army Air Force Technical Training Command, Willow Run, 1942 - 1945. Retired. Eaton Corporation Research Center

The Ford Airplane School at Willow Run: A Little-Known Part of the Bomber Plant

BEGINNINGS: The year was 1941. I was driving out of Ypsilanti on Ecorse Road one afternoon. Just east of town, I was surprised to see bulldozers tearing up and leveling the Wiard Orchards and Ford Farms properties. On the West End, a skeleton of steel beams was rising. Ford was building an aircraft factory.

Why? We already had a well-equipped Army Air Corps. (It was still six years before it would be made a separate arm of the military and be renamed the United States Air Force.) President Roosevelt had promised we would not get involved in the "European War." Were we planning to help the British fight off the Luftwaffe? On December 7 of that year, of course, the question was answered for us. The Japanese suddenly and single-handedly propelled us into world war.

By the spring of 1942, one of the largest aircraft factories and airports in the world was rising in fields where vegetables and fruit trees were still growing.

At the time I was principal, and teaching industrial arts, at Eaton Rapids High School. It didn't take long into 1942 before rationing began and materials for school shops became hard to get. We registered for the draft, War Bond drives were organized, and we were all exhorted to "support the war effort." We bought War Stamps, held air raid drills and practiced "blackouts," collected rubber tires, fats and oils, newspapers, metal scrap (including the foil wrappers from chewing gum and cigarette packs, and some of mom's pots and pans). We joined the Civil Air Patrol, neighborhood air raid captains were appointed, and a national sense of patriotism swept us along.

In that spring, I was recruited by the Ford Motor Company to join the Trade School staff. Ford and the Army were preparing to train GIs to service the B-24 bomber.

I resigned my high school teaching job in June and reported for duty at Willow Run along with two other instructors. The place was still under construction. Deep mud surrounded the building, there were dirt floors, and the parking lot was out among the grapevines but, little by little, workers were beginning to turn out parts for the mighty B-24.

Yankee Air Force Hangar during the time that Mr. Staebler was teaching at the Ford Aircraft School. The view is looking east, at what is now our front.

GEARING UP: The Ford Airplane School, as it was known, had nothing to work with: no models, no mockups, no teaching materials except promotional literature from Consolidated Aircraft Company in California, the designers of the B-24 "Liberator." The GIs were pouring in; it didn't matter that we weren't ready. The whole plant was our "laboratory," but we weren't allowed to touch anything.

My first class of 25 marched to the Engine Dressup Department where workers were installing accessories on the Pratt and Whitney R-1830 engines. I could point and say, "That's the starter, that's the carburetor, that's the generator, but don't touch it." Other classes studied other parts of the airplane the same way. There was not a complete airplane on the field. But we had pictures of them! We held class on the balconies of various parts of the factory and had to compete with the noise of trucks, tractors, presses, conveyors, overhead cranes, and supervisors on bicycles and scooters. But no airplane noise.

Consolidated Aircraft considered Willow Run an upstart, never believing that bombers could be built on an assembly line, or that we could teach airplane maintenance without an airplane.

We did acquire some manuals used by assembly-line workers. We also were sometimes able to appropriate a rejected part if we could pry it loose from an inspector whose job it was to account for virtually everything.

Meanwhile, the plant was busily making parts, and assembly lines were being readied. Some finished assemblies were now being shipped to plants in Fort Worth and Wichita.

The School continued to grow and hoards of GIs continued to arrive. We wrote our own teaching manuals, acquired engines to work on and studied wing and fuselage parts. We built mockups for landing gear, hydraulic and electrical systems, removal and replacement of engines, and propeller overhaul. We took over the separate building just north of the main factory for classrooms and offices.

Finally, in 1943, we moved the whole School into the five hangars on the east side of the airfield. These had been built for making special-use modifications to planes after assembly, but never became operational. Such modifications were done instead at Wayne County Airport (now Detroit Metro), to which the planes were flown for this work.

The largest and northernmost of these five hangars, now the YAF Museum, had engines on wing mockups lining both sides of the building, and housed turbocharger, engine, and propeller change fixtures. The second floor contained offices and parts and tool bins. No overhaul work was done here; this was where we taught maintenance and service, inspections, minor repair, and removal and replacement. Three or four other hangars, now gone, held hydraulic systems, electrical mockups, landing gear, and classrooms. The far south hangars were a part of the final phase of School training, the flight line.

FULL OPERATION: The School began to really hum. More and more equipment arrived, more instructors were hired and the GIs just kept coming. There appeared barracks, mess halls, libraries, and recreational facilities. At its peak, there were over 300 instructors from all walks of life. We had teachers, truck drivers, mechanics, farmers, college professors, electricians–anyone willing to learn the plane and teach it. Most of them had never seen the plane before. Each prospective instructor went through the entire seven phases of instruction as a student with a class of GIs, then was certified to teach one specific phase to the next arriving class. Sometimes we wondered how we were going to win the war this way. Often, we heard Willow Run referred to as "Will It Run?"

By 1944, there was an amazing amount of teaching material. In the flight line phase, 13 airplanes were kept in flying condition (no small task, with flocks of trainees crawling all over them all the time) so they could be requisitioned by the Army at any time. On them, we taught all inspections–25-, 50-, and 100-hour--and preflight, including runup and checkout. Some of these engines ran their 1800 hours all on ground time before being replaced.

I recall that two instructors were assigned to each plane, one on each shift, and the competition between them to produce planes in top condition was keen. Neither wanted to feel responsible if a plane had to start the next shift anything short of fully operational. For example, if we were doing preflight, and an engine wouldn't start, the next shift had to run on three engines until the problem was solved. As required by the Army, we kept complete logs. No one wanted to see any defects marked "unrepaired" on their logs.

We had only two hangars to use for these planes, so we rotated being inside. Classes continued just the same outdoors on the ramp in 100-degree summer sun and below-zero winter cold, with just a few cabin and space heaters. We ran two nine-hour shifts, six days a week, and I guess we managed to get the job done. In the three years the School ran, over 25,000 mechanics and flight engineers were trained.

THE END, AND A NEW BEGINNING: In the spring of 1945, with the surrender of Germany, things began to wind down. Soon, the Army, seeing no necessity for continued training, closed everything down and the base was abandoned. All the School facilities are now gone except one, the home of the Yankee Air Force; indeed, a fitting transition. It's been really gratifying to see this old hangar come alive again, thanks to the vision of many dedicated people, after it sat some 35 years abandoned and neglected. I remember every detail of how we spent over 100 hours a week in this very building, learning, then teaching, the intricate details of the old B-24 to trainees, hoping we could provide them with the know-how to "Keep 'em Flying."

HENRY GRUDZIEN

by Roger Peterson

Every once in a while you get a chance to do something that is a genuine pleasure. Being asked to do this article is just such a task. The only problem is that I found it impossible to do so without writing it from my own subjective point of view.

Henry Grudzien ("Gru-jean") is a native Michigander who grew up on the West side of Detroit. After graduating from Salesian High School in 1959 he worked as a draftsman until November 13, 1963. That's when he became hooked on aviation for good by joining the United States Air Force.

After basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, he went to Weapons Mechanic School at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado. In 1964 he was assigned to the 70th Munitions Maintenance Squadron at Kincheloe Air Force Base, Marquette, Michigan. His work there was with Boeing B52-H "Stratofortresses hence his continuing affection for "Clyde" (the YAF's B-52D). He also developed an affection for the "Yoopee" and its residents. In 1966 he was transferred to the 13th tactical Bomb Squadron at Clark Air Base in the Philippines. There Henry met his favorite airplane: the Martin B-57 "Canberra." While serving with the 13th Henry was sent on temporary duty to Danang and Phan Rang Air Force Bases in Vietnam. In 1967 he was transferred back to the 70th Munitions Maintenance Squadron at Kincheloe where he served until his discharge from the Air Force in November of 1967.

Returning to southeastern Michigan he resumed work as a draftsman. Today he is a tool designer with MP Pumps. He and Kay, his wife of 31 years, reside in Roseville, Michigan. They have two daughters. Karen (30) is married, living and working as a librarian in London, England. Kristin (28) lives at home and is a veterinary technician. The family is an active one. Henry is a talented maker of wood crafts as those of us lucky enough to have received some of his work well know. He is also an excellent builder of model aircraft. Kay and Kirstin love horses (as much as Henry loves airplanes) and both love to ride. Kirstin is active in "dressage" activities with "Mom" being an active supporter.

Henry joined the YAF in December of 1981 becoming a Founder Member. Initially, like all early members, he was concerned with cleaning and fixing up the hangar. He helped with the B-52 after its arrival in 1983 as well as generally helping wherever else he could. In 1986 he joined the Display and Artifacts side of the museum. There, to quote Bill Lary, the now retired long time Curator of that area, he became "the strong right arm" of the area. Many of the exhibits and the display area reflect Henry's work. He was also a member of the notorious crew of the "MASH" beer tent run by the Display staff for a number of years at Memorial and Founders Day open houses. He remains a member of the staff in that section becoming Interim Co-Curator with the writer in 1997.

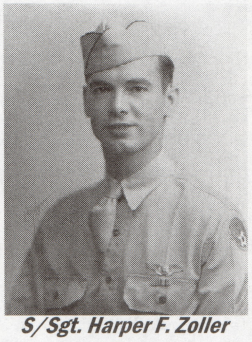
His activities since have not been confined just to the Display section. When the F-7F "Tigercat" arrived he helped assemble it and in 1989 joined its crew, remaining a member until its departure in 1990. He then transferred to the crew of the DC-6B and has been a part of that crew ever since, working on the interior and as one of the crew that mans the plane's video theater for special events. When asked why he's not hanging around the YAF's RB-57 given his Air Force experience he good-naturedly answers that "It's the wrong model." Translated to non-Canberra people this means that it's not an "American" model. It has the original English-design round canopy and side-by-side seating while the Martin-modified design had tandem seating under an elongated canopy. In this writer's view he also means it doesn't have enough armament (What else can you expect from a Weapons man). He does view our "Canberra" and its progress with interest and is extremely curious as to why our RB-57, a model which to the best of his knowledge never was equipped with wing guns, has wings with blanked-over gun ports

Everyone who's worked with Henry agrees that what makes him so valuable is his quiet, cooperative and unassuming nature. It would be impossible to find a more willing, hard working individual. He never promises more than he can deliver but he delivers on what he says he will. He's been a model of restraint; in the 10 years I've worked with him I have never seen him lose his temper or raise his voice. He's been involved with every area of the display area from building exhibits to painting, emptying trash, cleaning glass and vacuuming the carpets in the display areas.

On behalf of myself and the YAF I'd like to say to Henry, "thanks for your presence and help a thousand times over."

Harper Zoller and the Crew of the "Lady Luck"

Harper Filer Zoller Jr. (my uncle, nicknamed "Buster") grew up in Detroit and graduated from MacKenzie High School in 1936. After high school he went to college in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, but later quit and went to work for Cadillac Motors at the assembly plant on Michigan Ave. in Detroit.



S/Sgt. Harper F. Zoller

In late 1942, with the outbreak of WWII, my uncle Buster joined the Army Air Corp. to serve his country like so many others (ASN 36529756). His first training assignment was the Harlingen Army Gunnery School, in Harlingen, Texas in Dec 1942. At this school he was trained in shooting 50 cal. aircraft guns and was subjected to pressure chamber tests equaling an attitude of 38,000 feet to simulate high altitude flying. He graduated with a good record on Dec 19 and was promoted to Sergeant. He was then shipped off to Lowry Field in Denver, Colo. to attend the Army's course on gun, bomb, bomb rack and turret maintenance. After completing this course he was on the road again in March to Davis-Monthan Field in Tucson, Arizona and assigned with the 60th Bombardment Sqd., 39th Bombardment Group. In this assignment his unit did a lot of flying, once in the early morning and once in the afternoon, 4-hour hops each. In one of his letters home he described losing an engine, and nearly being hit by another plane on the runway - all in one day!

Buster's last training assignment was to Biggs Field in El Paso, Texas in April 1943 with the Crowder Prov. Grp., 459th Bomb Sqd. It was here in early May that he was assigned his B-24 crew under Lt. Curelli. His crew flew many cross-country hops. One hop was to Gulfport, Miss. then on to Kelly Field and then returning to Biggs Field. In May during some exercises, two planes collided at night during a severe storm killing 17 men. He described that in his own plane, the pilot that night had them all looking out their windows for other planes during this severe storm.

After completing this faze of training near the end of June, the Army Air Corp. shipped the crew off to Lincoln, Nebraska to pick up a new B-24D at the plant there. It was here that they filled out power of attorney papers and wills before going overseas. From Lincoln he and his crew flew this new B-24 over to England via Bangor, Maine and Newfoundland. Shortly after arriving they had to give up their brand-new B-24, which was apparently common.

By July 10, 1943 he was already overseas in England probably at the 8th Army Air Force, 44th Bomb Group's home base at Shipdham, England. During his last two months my uncle Buster probably didn't receive any letters from home since the mail couldn't keep up with his unit. In his last letters home he wasn't able to say at all what was going on or even make a hint of where they were since all their mail was censored. Therefore he found it difficult to write since he couldn't say anything. But all of this didn't stop him from writing home to his family. Without getting anything in return, he still continued to write. This is a good indication of the wonderful and thoughtful person he was.

A few days before Aug. 3, 1943, his crew moved onto Benina Main in Benghazi, Libya in North Africa, with the 44th Bomb Group, 66th Bomb Squadron. He described weather as very hot and the water bad. They were at Benina Main on August 1, 1943 at the time of the great Ploesti, Romania, Oil Field Mission but were apparently without a plane and therefore did not take part. After the Ploesti mission they helped to search for missing crews from the mission.

During the morning of August 1, 1943, day of the Ploesti mission, there was another crew, Pilot Tom Scriven's crew, who was preparing to take their ship, "*Lady Luck*" #41-23778 F in the air. They encountered mechanical problems or overfueling on "*Lady Luck*", so they had to switch over to another plane, the "*Scrappy II*". Unfortunately, "*Scrappy II*" was lost and all were killed at the target over Ploesti. This left "*Lady Luck*" without a crew and this is how Lt. Curelli and his crew (Buster's crew) were assigned to the "*Lady Luck*" . This plane, #41-23778 F, once named "*Jenny*" was first piloted by another crew and had quite a history.

Harper F. Zoller
N. Africa – Aug. 1943

Walter Patrick and Harold Samuelian were one-time crew members of this B-24 and told me its story. They had already completed over 25 missions before the Ploesti mission and therefore did not take part in that mission. The aircraft #41-

23778 F was one of the first B-24s sent over to England by the 44th Bomb Group in Sept. 1942. The plane's first mission was to Abbeyville, France on Dec. 12, 1942. It was also in the very first bombing mission into Germany in WWII over Wilhelmshaven, the German U-Boat base, on Jan 27, 1943. On this mission, the plane barely made it home after being badly shot up (approx. 200 holes in it!) and having hydraulic problems.

Crew of the "Lady Luck" in training in the USA. May-June 1943

As pilot Jim Kahl was transferred and Tom Scriven became pilot the crew renamed the aircraft "*Lady Luck*", a name which came from a London (Barksdale Field) restaurant napkin given to Walter Hazelton (a crew member) by his girlfriend. Buster's assignment was as a waist gunner on board his B-24. Their first mission was a very long one from N. Africa to Wiener Neustadt, Austria on Aug. 13, 1943. Their second mission was to bomb the Airdrome at Foggia, Italy on August 16, 1943. This was the very day the American forces were crossing over to the toe of Italy from Sicily. Previous flights were "milk runs" but on this day, the Germans had been moving forces around and they met the American bombers with everything they could put up in the air. A total of 25 bombers left Benina Main at 0430, reached the target at 1033 and were attacked by large numbers of Me 109s, Ju 88s and Focke-Wulf 190s. 7 to 8 (or about a third of the planes) were shot down including some of the most famous planes from the Ploesti Oil Field mission only two weeks before. Buster's (Harper's) plane was lost near Routi, Italy.

The following account was made by Wesley Zimmerman, the only survivor:

"Contrary to the MACR report, I do not recall our ship being hit by flak. After passing over the target and dropping our bombs, one of the engines went out due to an extreme oil leak. When this #3 engine failed and we fell out of formation, that is when we were hit by enemy fighters. After several direct hits from the fighters, we tried to get out of the plane, but could not. The main hydraulic system would not operate, and we couldn't get the bomb bay doors open in order to jump. At this point, Sgt. Grinde, engineer, went out the sliding door to the bomb bay without a parachute on, to try to open the bomb bay doors manually. This was the time that the ship went into a dive or spin and the sliding door came down and we could not get out. Since I was on the flight deck I don't know if any of the crew in the rear got out before the plane exploded. But when it did explode - which I think it was caused by the fire in that burning engine reaching the gas tanks - I was somehow blown clear, and opened my chute and came down safely. I had several small cuts on my head and arms, and was black and blue over most of my body for two or three weeks. I was taken prisoner by the Italians and was in several camps before escaping and returning to Africa - and later back to England, and then the States. Also contrary to the reports, I saw only one other chute and that landed several hundred yards from where I did. I went to it and it was Lt. Curelli. He was badly torn up and was dead."

"Lady Luck"(#41-23778) 44th Bomb Group about

Two men in the town of Routi, Italy, stated that the plane seemed to partly explode in mid-air and several crew members were seen to parachute from the plane. When these two men arrived at the scene of the crash and landing parachutists, they saw several civilians taking many articles, such as watches, rings and even identification papers from the bodies. Only five of the nine bodies could be identified due to these thefts. They were Lts. Curelli and Papadopulos, Sgts. Hughes, Grinde and Shafer.

The crew were first buried in Routi, Italy then were later moved in 1944 to a military cemetery in Bari, Italy. Finally my Grandpa and Grandma had my Uncle Buster moved to his final resting place at White Chapel Cemetery in Troy, Michigan.

At first my father, Jim Zoller, knew very little of what happened to his brother. In the past few years we were very fortunate to receive letters from Walter Patrick and Harold Samuelian who were previous crew members. They were kind enough to give me the previous and interesting history of #41-23778 F known as "Jenny" then "Lady Luck". Also we were able to contact Mrs.

Wesley Zimmerman (wife of the only survivor). Then in 1998 I received a letter from Bob Blakeney from who I was able to learn a great deal.

He was flying as waist gunner in "*Black Sheep*" flying alongside and even facing "*Lady Luck*" on August 16, 1943 as she went down near the target. His B-24 was heavily damaged and crash landed on a beach at Reggio de Calabria. Five were killed in the landing and Bob was taken prisoner by the Italians. Bob was in prison in the Sulmona, Italy camp PG-78 and then was able to escape with another crew member, John Hess. They spent about 6 weeks crossing the Italian frontier before coming onto the safety of the Canadian lines about 25 days later. An attached formation sheet shows all the planes and the crews who went down on the Foggia mission of August 16.

Crew of the "Lady Luck" #41-23778 F

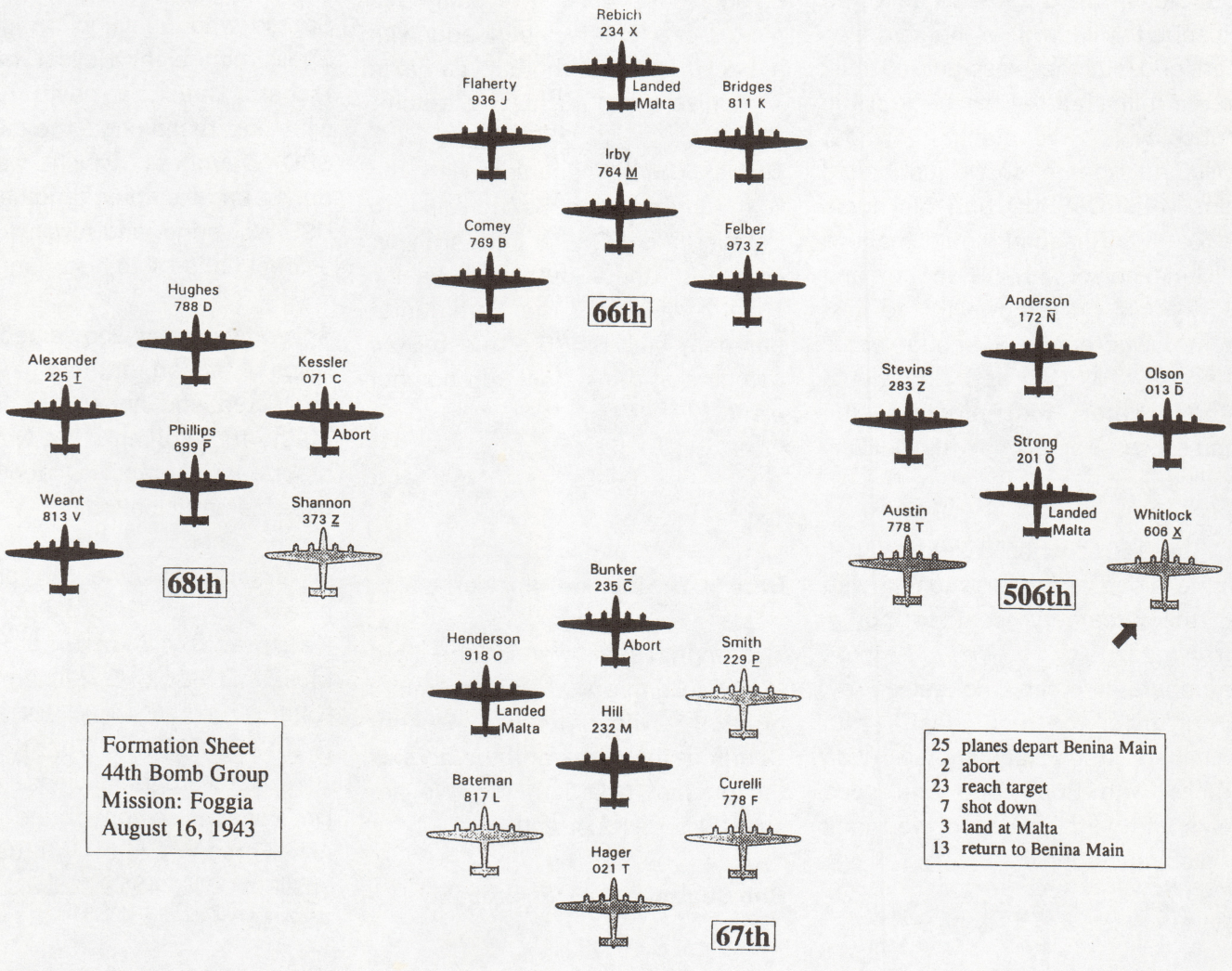
Pilot - Rocco A. Curelli	Biddeford, Maine	KIA
Copilot - John G. Papadopulos	Salt Lake City, Utah	KIA
Navigator - Walter Rossi	Bronx, N.Y.	KIA
Bombardier - Victor T. Torrou	Falls Church, Va.	KIA
Engineer - John H. Grinde	Morrisonville, Wisc.	KIA
Radio Op. - Wesley L. Zimmerman	Winston Salem, N.C	POW
Gunner - Deforest L. Ela	Quincy, Mass.	KIA
Gunner - Raymond C. Shafer	Anderson, Ind.	KIA
Gunner - John R. Hughes	Bogeta, N.J.	KIA
Gunner - Harper F. Zoller	Detroit, Mich.	KIA

Crew of the "Black Sheep" #42 - 41021 T

Pilot - Carl S. Hager	POW
Copilot - Robert E. Pimentel	KIA
Navigator - Wallace P. Baker	KIA
Bombardier - John D. Mills	KIA
Engineer - Francis X. Curry	KIA
Radio Operator - Howard C. Woods	KIA
Gunner - Isabelino Dones	POW
Waist Gunner - Robert W. Blakeney	POW
Waist Gunner - John M. Hess	POW
Tail Gunner - Henry R. Farley	POW

44th Bomb Group
"The Flying Eightballs"

Written and dedicated to those who gave their lives in honor and protection of our country,
as told to Bob Paul (#G5339 WR) by Bob Zoller (nephew of Harper F. Zoller)

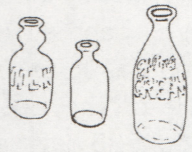


Formation Sheet
44th Bomb Group
Mission: Foggia
August 16, 1943

25 planes depart Benina Main
2 abort
23 reach target
7 shot down
3 land at Malta
13 return to Benina Main

Connie's Corner

Viewing the "Milky Way"



Most YAF members consider themselves "Old Timers." And being "Old Timers" they had to adjust through the years from bi-planes to jets, from stick shifts to automatic. The one thing "Old Timers" seem to acquire is a good memory.

Several years ago, on *"60 Minutes"* a program honoring "The Last Milk Man in Kalamazoo, Michigan," who had just retired, brought back memories to me of our milkman in Detroit. In the 1930s he delivered Rosebud Milk with a horse-drawn cart and put the glass-bottled milk in our milk chute at the back of the house wall. We didn't know our milkman's name, so we just called him MR. ROSEBUD and his horse BUD. Mr. Rosebud would make a clicking noise with his mouth and Bud would move down to the next home, where Mr. Rosebud would then say "WHOA" and Bud would stop. Later, with progress, the horse was replaced with delivery trucks.

In the '40s, when World War II came along and gas rationing with it, the Creamery went to horse-drawn trucks. Yes, Yankee members, I can honestly say, "Thanks for the memories!" With milkmen and such...horse-driven trucks...with Bob Hope and good folks and people we love, we thank you so much!!!

Y.A.F. LIBERATOR AWARD

The annual Yankee Air Force "Liberator" Award was presented at the annual tri-service ROTC awards ceremony on April 6 at the University of Michigan to Air Force Cadet Samuel C. Miller of Lakeport, Michigan by Y.A.F. member Harold W. Sherman. The award is presented to the AFROTC sophomore whose attitude, enthusiasm and leadership best exemplifies the image and the heritage of the World War II B-24 Liberator air crews.

This award was first presented in 1991. It is a framed photograph of the "*MICHIGAN*," a Consolidated B-24J Liberator bomber of World War II, on whose nose was painted a picture of a female cheerleader with a backdrop of a football game in The University of Michigan Stadium.

The "*MICHIGAN*" served with the 64th Bombardment Squadron, 43rd Bombardment Group, Fifth Army Air Force in the Southwest Pacific Theatre of war. The Ford Motor Company built 8,685 of these B-24 bombers at the Willow Run bomber plant.

Barry's Brainbuster answer:

This month's answer is: the Ford Motor Company. The terminal building was at the present Dearborn test track and the hotel is the present Dearborn Inn. We are sure this one is correct!

Bob Seaton – back on probation!

THE WOLVERINE & THE SABLE

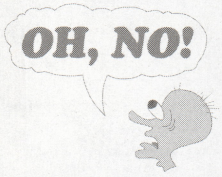
The Yankee Air Force of Belleville, Michigan and the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum of Kalamazoo, Michigan would like to jointly announce the June 5th & 12th program "Great Lakes Flattops: The USS Wolverine & USS Sable."

This program will investigate the two ships, their conversion from civilian transports to military duty, the men who served on them, and the aircraft and men who alighted upon their decks.

The programs will take place at 1:00 PM on both dates in both locations, with the major presenters speaking at each museum. Presently, speakers will be: Sam Sturgis who qualified on the USS Sable with eight Hellcat landings, Richard Bauer, a naval historian who has researched the Air Zoo's SBD Dauntless which was lost during an attempted landing on the USS Wolverine, and Alwyn Johnson, a Great Lakes ship historian.

Several veterans who served on the ships or landed on them have been contacted and hopefully some will attend the program. We would like others to contact us about their possible participation.

To attend the June 5th program, please contact Gerard Pahl of the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum, 3101 E. Milham Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49002-1700, (616)-382-6555. To attend the June 12th program, please contact Dr. Roger Peterson of the Yankee Air Force, 1211 Whittier Rd, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-2151, (734) 487-3163.



Mistake Made in *Barry's Brainbuster*

We received the following from Robert J. Shoens #4051 via e-mail to the website:

"Barry's answer in the April HH is incorrect. The Dearborn Engine Plant is located in the Rouge Complex. No airplanes were ever built there. However, aircraft engines were built there during WWII.

Ford airplanes were built at Ford Airport on Oakwood Blvd. In Dearborn. The airport and some of the buildings are still in existence, however it is now used as a test track for Ford vehicles.

We also received the following from the "Brain Buster" himself.

To the Editor:

In the April issue the "Barry's Brain Buster" question asked what the Dearborn Engine Plant was originally built for. The answer in print was "The Ford Airplane Factory." This is incorrect. Somewhere along the line of communication we had a hiccup. In actuality, the plant was built as the "Rouge Aircraft Building" or "Aircraft Engine Building." Both names were used. Ground-breaking for the building took place on 9/17/1940. The test cell tuned its first engine on 7/25/41 and the first production run R2800 was completed on 8/15/41. All total, 64,708 P&W R2800 engines and 52,244 Turbo-superchargers were built there. The engines were used in the P-47 Thunderbolt and F4U Cosair as well as other aircraft types. The "Ford-built" turbos were used specifically in B-24s and B-17s. The plant, now the Dearborn Engine Plant, produced engines for numerous Ford and Mercury products such as the Falcon, Comet, Pinto, Mustang, Escort, and Tracer as well as industrial-use engines and fuel tanks.

Barry Vance – B-17 Crew

Our apologies to Barry and the rest of the reading audience. It seems that a person who shall remain nameless, whose initials are Bob Seaton, made the mistake and has taken a cut in pay and a demotion. It seems that the information was transferred between Barry and the village idiot during a session at a favorite watering hole and one of the people involved was not totally together. We leave it to your imagination which was which. Sorry, but at least we know that people are reading this!

Bob Seaton – Village Idiot

Mustang Round-Up
by Mike Luther

On July 17th and 18th this event will be held on museum grounds. We will have about five P-51 Mustangs and possibly the B-17 *Sentimental Journey* and He-111 Henkel from the CAF Arizona wing. Along with the aircraft, there will be Ford Mustang cars on display with one of each year represented for the 35th anniversary of the introduction of the first Mustang automobile.

Symposium night of July 17 will feature three World War II aviation speakers:

- **Bud Anderson,** pilot of the original P-51 *"Old Crow"* and Chuck Yeager's wing man.
- **Gunther Rall,** the highest scoring ace surviving today. Mr. Rall was a pilot for Germany and flew Me-109s with 700 combat missions and 275 victories on the eastern front.
- **Robert Morgan,** pilot of the B-17 "*Memphis Belle*," the first bomber to complete 25 missions and its tour of duty.

Come and hear these great pilots with the backdrop of their respective aircraft. Certain aircraft will make special appearances this night.

We are looking for personnel for the Mustang Round-Up to help with admissions and parking. Please let me know or sign up in the log book in the lunchroom at the museum during the month of July.

GM Recall

On April 8th, the staff of *Hangar Happenin's* was saddened to hear that General Motors had issued a recall. This recall involved one Larry Redmond, who has been working at the museum for the past three years as part of the GM - UAW Job Bank program. Larry did a lot of the general janitorial duties, set up the dog house for meetings and removed the chairs after the meetings. He also made the model of the proposed new hangar and the .30 caliber machine guns for Dick Rice and the OV-10 Bronco. Larry will be sorely missed, but the entire organization wishes Larry the best and thanks him for all that he has done for us.

HELP! HELP!

The Y2K bug has bitten Hal Sherman. He will not successfully roll over into 01/01/00.

On 12/31/99 Hal is retiring from the library. His tenure covers 13 years as the Library Chairman and an additional 2 years as assistant librarian. He knows where all the dusty books are. All is not lost however. Hal would like to train someone in the convoluted intricacies of his variations of the Dewey cataloging system.

EXPAND YOUR MIND. Learn that history is half right and half wrong. Your job will be to find out which is which so you can put a book in its proper place.

One or two dedicated people are needed **NOW!** This knowledge is not something learned overnight. You will not be alone. Donna Day, Jim Connolly and I will provide all the support we can.

Contact Hal in the library or wherever you can find him. The library hours are Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday from 10 AM to 4 PM.

Erwin Stirnweis, Library Chair

FLYABLE AIRCRAFT POLISHING PARTY

On March 20th, a crew of 149 people attacked the B-17, C-47 and B-25. They came armed with polish and rags. War was waged against corrosion and oxidation. The battle was tough, the enemy had a year to work its way into the aluminum, but corrosion and oxidation were no match for the determination of the crew. Soon the battle was over and all that remained were three absolutely beautiful aircraft.

This was the third annual flyable aircraft polishing party, and it was the most successful ever. We had the best weather (in the 50s), we had the most people (149), and we polished 3 aircraft (B-17, C-47, and B-25). The polishing party did not officially begin until 9:00 AM, but some volunteers were ready to work at 8! By 9:00 a steady stream of people filled the hangar. They were put on the B-17. There were people of all ages, from Cub Scouts to people long retired. They all came to work on the museum aircraft, which suddenly became their aircraft! By 10:00 the parking lot was full, but people still came in the door. At this time people were being moved to other aircraft.

The kitchen staff was busy preparing the lunch meal (no hot dogs this year!). While all of this was going on, the *Hangar Happenin's* staff was labeling all 2100 issues of the April issue. In fact a few polishers were "hijacked" and became labelers. Also at this time, ground school was being conducted for the B-17. This is why no pilots and flight engineers were seen to help in the polishing party.

At 11:40 the call for lunch was given. The lunch crew braced for a rush of people, but no one came. They could not understand why. Then they looked in the hangar and understood why. Just as the call for lunch went out, the ramp crew opened the hangar door and the B-17 was about to be pulled outside to shine in the sun. Everybody wanted to see how fantastic the aircraft looked!

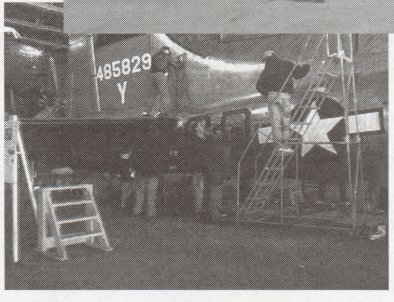
After lunch a group photograph was taken in front of the B-17, then work continued on finishing all of the aircraft. By the time evening came around, all of the aircraft were gleaming and ready for the upcoming airshow season. A great time was had by all. A job well done!

Many thanks go out to everyone who helped in the polishing party. The aircraft will look great on the airshow circuit. Remember to plan for next year's polishing party, which will be held on the 3rd Saturday in March 2000! **Start saving your rags!**

Dan Tomczak would like to personally thank Don Burke, Bob Seaton, Earl Hewett, Jim Redick, Kevin Walsh, Lori Little, Mary Jane Medlock-Hill, Jerry Curtis, Debbie Stewart, Yvonne Harner, Sandy Seaton, and Carol Guenther. These people put in an extra effort by setting up the ladders and steps for everyone's use, directing the many polishers, preparing and serving the lunch, and cleaning the kitchen and Doghouse areas. Also, thanks go to J. D Hill and Karen Maciag who handled the gift shop (which had a very busy day), the tour desk (who had to answer the many questions leading up to the event), and membership (who had many renewals and several new members)!

THE RESULTS OF THE 3RD ANNUAL POLISHING PARTY – NOW YOU CAN SEE WHAT YOU MISSED !

We'll apologize up front for not having everyone's name next to the pictures. It was hard enough for us to operate the cameras and not bump into things!



Irv Kaminski the "Bambi Slayer" (above) (see December '98 *Hangar Happenin's*) on the elevator polishing the vertical as part of his "community service."

We wish we had gotten the names of the two special people (below) who have been to all of the polishing parties. They do very good work!

You mean that one person is holding up that whole wing? OR How many people can fit on a wing of a B-17G?

Debbie Stewart, Sandy Seaton, and Yvonne Harner, along with the "Leader" Dan Tomczak, saw to it that everyone had some lunch as a *thank you* for their efforts.

The "*Lady*" looked really fine in the sunshine! Our apologies for not having pictures of the C-47 and B-25 polishing crews. We'll do better next year!

Photos by Lori Little and Bob Seaton

Our newest members are John Yuill (Saginaw Valley), Lynne Cookson, Jeff Neal, Aaron Angelini (Jr Member), Randy Visintainer, Joel Thurtell, David Mott, Todd Aichholz, Fred Mouch, Dave Howell, Maury Brackenbury, Steve LeGenc, Nick Sipius, Samantha Gioia (Jr Member), Rich Brace, Scott Fohrman, George Larson, Patrick Hurst, Edie Rodriguez

BH

SPECIAL MEETING FOR FINAL PLANNING
OF MEMORIAL DAY EVENT:

Tuesday, May 18, 1999
7:30 PM
In the YAF Meeting Room

Everyone is welcome! Even if you already have your job lined up, we welcome more suggestions and ideas. A workers' sign-up book is in the Meeting Room. There are lots of areas to choose from. Come join the fun and support your Museum!

Our **Education Committee** has received many requests to bring our love of aviation to local classrooms. Bette Watson needs your help! If you are a teacher, a parent, a pilot, or YAF member interested in visiting a nearby classroom during the school day, please contact Bette by leaving a message at the Museum: (734) 483-4030.

CAN YOU TOP THIS?!

IMOGENE LARY, MOTHER OF BILL LARY, RECENTLY TURNED THE GRAND OLD AGE OF 92.

1999 ELECTION COMMITTEE SCHEDULE FOR THE WILLOW RUN DIVISION OF THE YANKEE AIR FORCE, INC.

These dates represent deadlines and fixed committee meetings and activities. Other meetings and activities will be scheduled separately as needed.

JANUARY 1999
Submit committee names to the Board.

FEBRUARY 17, 1999
Appointment of Committee by the Board.
Organizational meeting: elect Chair, review schedule, review rules and suggest revisions.

MARCH 20, 1999
Meeting: finalize schedule and rules, submit final copies to Secretary and Legal Council for consistency with the By-Laws. Give copies to Board and post.

MARCH 27, 1999
Prepare and deliver to the *Hangar Happenin's* staff, for inclusion in the May edition, the complete Annual Election notice including the self-nomination form and elections schedule.

APRIL 17, 1999
Obtain from Secretary list of Board members including those whose terms expire. At the April Board meeting, Board Secretary will notify Board members whose terms are expiring and provide them with self-nomination forms. Self-nomination forms will also be made available concurrently to the general membership.

MAY, JUNE, JULY 1999
Gather and prepare all materials needed for September mailing of ballots. Arrange for printer to do ballots and By-Laws. By-Law changes presented to Board.

AUGUST 13, 1999
Deadline for candidates' submission to Division Headquarters of completed self-nomination forms. Election Committee will collect these at Post Office at 4 PM.

AUGUST 14, 1999
Election Committee meets to review self-nomination forms received. Membership Committee verifies eligibility, accepts or rejects. Prepare National ballot.

AUGUST 16, 1999
Complete Ballot preparation. Send ballots to printer.

AUGUST 21, 1999
Prepare By-Law ballots, as needed.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1999
Request Membership List, labels (2 sets) of members of record as of September 1, 1999, and check off list in alphabetical order.

SEPTEMBER 12-19, 1999
Assemble Ballots and envelopes (3) for mailing. Check off on list as "Out." Complete preparations for mailing and check for accuracy. Request stamps from Treasurer. Metered mailing preferable.

SEPTEMBER 20, 1999
Mail ballots. Prepare standardized election report results form for Board of Directors.

OCTOBER 8, 1999
Deadline for Ballot return (12 Noon).

OCTOBER 9, 1999
Log-in ballots. Solicit auxiliary ballot counters, the number to be determined according to need.

OCTOBER 16, 1999
Ballot Count at 9 AM.

OCTOBER 20, 1999
Election report presented to the Board.

NOVEMBER 15, 1999
Last day for challenges.
Review challenges and resolve, or forward to Board.

NOVEMBER 17, 1999
Final Election report to the Board.

NOVEMBER 30, 1999
Submit Budget for next year

SUBMITTED BY THE ELECTION COMMITTEE.

Hangar Happenin's is printed by Huron Valley Printing and Imaging. We thank them for their assistance and help.

YANKEE AIR FORCE, INC.
1999 SELF- NOMINATING FORM

NAME _____ MEMBER NO. _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ OCCUPATION _____

NATIONAL OFFICE DESIRED _____

YANKEE AIR FORCE ACTIVITIES

PAST OR PRESENT OFFICES HELD _____

_____

COMMITTEE SERVICE _____

_____

ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATION _____

_____

OTHER INTERESTS _____

YOUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE _____

_____

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT I AM A CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

NOMINATING FORM DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 1999.

MAIL TO
YANKEE AIR FORCE, INC.
ELECTION COMMITTEE
P O BOX 590
BELLEVILLE MI 48112-0590

OR HAND DELIVER TO THE LOCKED BALLOT BOX IN THE MEETING ROOM AT YAF HEADQUARTERS.
NOTE: THIS NOMINATING FORM MUST BE IN THE HANDS OF THE YANKEE AIR FORCE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE NO LATER THAN 4:00 PM ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 1999.
NOMINATIONS RECEIVED ANY LATER THAN THAT TIME WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

ELIGIBILITY TO RUN FOR OFFICE AS STATED IN THE BY-LAWS, ARTICLE XI, B, SECTIONS 1 THROUGH 5. THE CANDIDATE MUST BE A GENERAL, LIFE, OR SENIOR LIFE MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING AS STATED IN THE BY-LAWS ARTICLE III, SECTION 1a, 1b & 2.

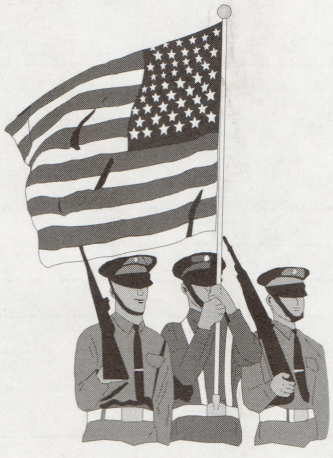
TO RUN FOR THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT OR VICE-PRESIDENT, THE CANDIDATE MUST HAVE HELD A POSITION ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR.

MEMORIAL DAY OPEN HOUSE

MONDAY MAY 31, 1999

8 AM TO 4 PM

$4 adults – $2 children
From 8 am to 12 noon



- **MUSEUM TOURS**
- **SPECIAL DISPLAYS**
- **USED BOOK SALES**
- **COCKPIT PHOTOS**
- **REFRESHMENTS**
- **AIRPLANE TOURS**
- **DOG TAGS**
- **HOT DOGS**

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PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS ON THE LABEL, AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CHANGES, NOTIFY THE MEMBERSHIP OFFICE.